Part 1

Getting to Know Excel 2010

With Microsoft's popular Excel spreadsheet program, you can enter, manipulate, and analyze data in ways that would be impossible, cumbersome, or error prone for you to do manually. This part gives you the basics you need to get up and running quickly in Excel.

In this part . . .

- Familiarizing Yourself with the Excel 2010 Window
- Navigating with the Mouse and Keyboard
- Introducing the Ribbon, Quick Access Toolbar, and Backstage View
- Formatting with Themes and Previewing Your Formatting Live

Excel 2010 Basics

Excel documents are known as *workbooks.* A single workbook can store as many sheets as will fit into memory, and these sheets are stacked like the pages in a notebook. Sheets can be either *worksheets* (a normal spreadsheet-type sheet with rows and columns) or *chart sheets* (a special sheet that holds a single chart).

Most of the time, you perform tasks in worksheets. Each worksheet uses a grid with 1,048,576 rows and 16,384 columns. Excel numbers rows starting with 1 and assigns letters to columns starting with A. After Excel exhausts the letters of the alphabet, column lettering continues with AA, AB, and so on. So column 1 is A, column 26 is Z, column 27 is AA, column 52 is AZ, column 53 is BA, and so on. Rows are numbered from 1 to 1,048,576, and columns are labeled from A to XFD.

The intersection of a row and a column is called a *cell.* A quick calculation using Excel tells us that this works out to 17,179,869,184 cells — more than enough for just about any use. Cells have *addresses,* which are based on their row and column. The upper-left cell in a worksheet is called A1, and the cell down at the bottom right is called XFD1048576. Cell K9 (also known as the dog cell) is the intersection of the eleventh column and the ninth row.

You might be wondering about the amount of system memory (known as random access memory, or RAM) you need to accommodate all those rows and columns. The memory you need depends on the amount of data you store in the workbook and the number of open workbooks. In Excel 2010, the memory available is limited by the maximum amount of memory that your version of Windows (XP, Vista, or Windows 7) can use.

Formulas

A cell in Excel can hold a number, some text, a formula, or nothing at all. You already know what numbers and text are, but you may be a bit fuzzy on the concept of a formula. A *formula* tells Excel to perform a calculation using information stored in other cells. For example, you can insert a formula that tells Excel to add the values in the first 10 cells in column A and to display the result in the cell that contains the formula.

Formulas can use normal arithmetic operators such as + (plus), – (minus), * (multiply), and / (divide). They can also use special built-in functions that let you do powerful things without much effort on your part. For example, Excel has functions that add a range of values, calculate square roots, compute loan payments, and even tell you the time of day. Excel has more than 300 built-in functions, which are categorized by type — Math, Financial, Statistical and so on. Part 5 covers the basics of using functions in Excel.

Active cell and ranges

In Excel, one of the cells in a worksheet is always the active cell. The *active cell* is the one that's selected, and it's displayed with a thicker border than the others. Its contents appear in the *formula bar*. You can select a group, or *range,* of cells by clicking and dragging the mouse pointer over them. You can then issue a command that does something to the active cell or to the range.

The selected range is usually a group of contiguous cells, but it doesn't have to be. To select a noncontiguous group of cells, select the first cell or group of cells, hold down the Ctrl key while you drag the mouse, and select the next cell or group of cells.

Familiarizing Yourself with the Excel 2010 Window

Figure 1-1 shows a typical Excel 2010 window, with the important parts labeled. This terminology rears its ugly head throughout the book, so you should review the figure from time to time.

Moving, resizing, and closing windows

When Excel and workbook windows are in a *restored* state (between a maximized and minimized state, that is) you can use the resize handles to adjust the window size to your liking. Move the mouse pointer to the area of the resize handle until the pointer changes to a double-headed arrow, and then drag with the mouse.

You can move the window around the screen by dragging the title bars. ***See also*** "Navigating with the Mouse and Keyboard," later in this part.

When the active workbook window is maximized, it shares a single Close button with the Excel window. After you click the shared Close button, Excel closes the active workbook.

Exiting Excel

Use any one of the following methods to close the Excel application:

- Click the Close button on the Excel title bar if one or no workbook is open.
- Click the File tab and then click the Exit button.
- Press the Alt key, then press F, and then press X.

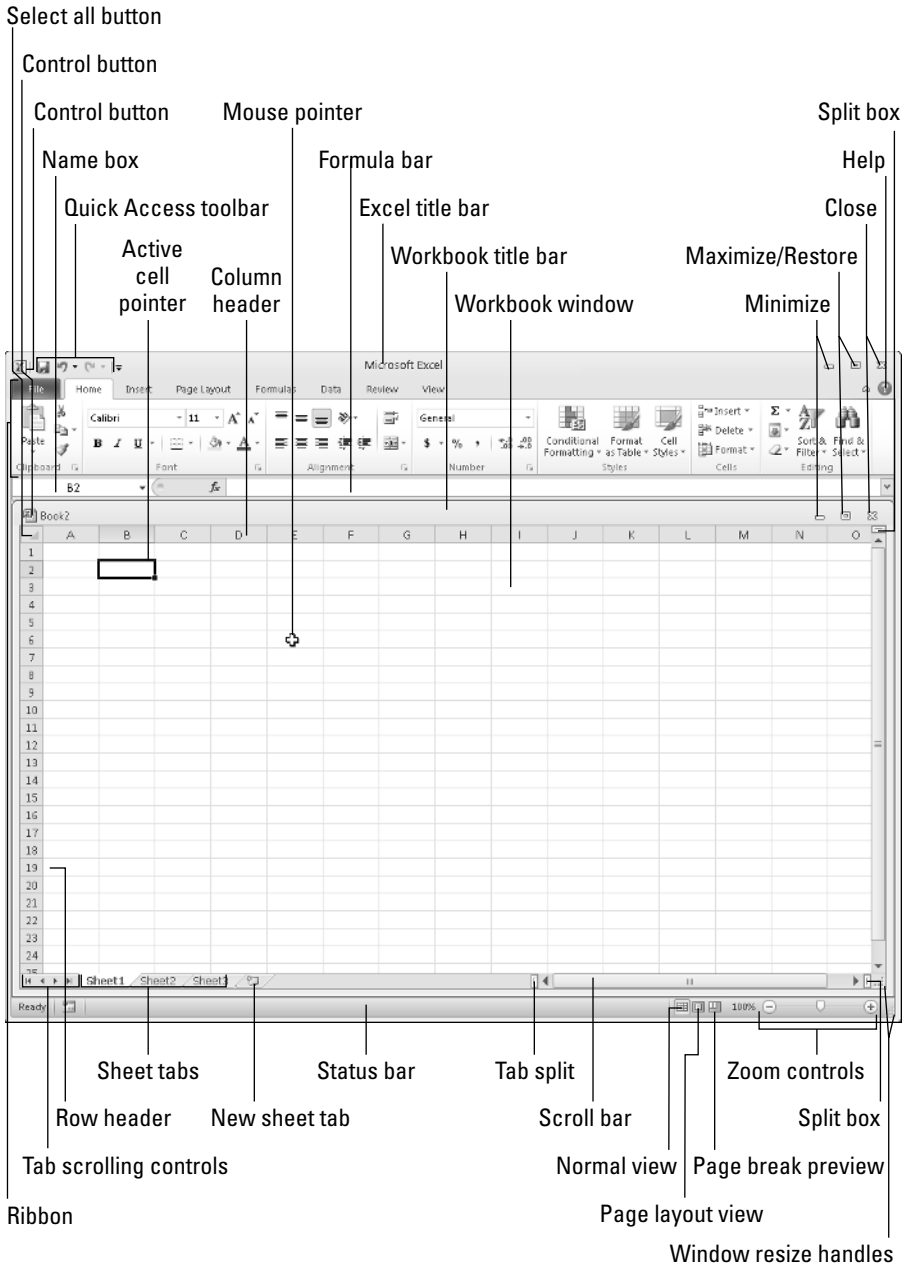

Select all button
Control button
Control button
Name box
Quick Access toolbar
Active cell pointer
Column header
Mouse pointer
Formula bar
Excel title bar
Workbook title bar
Workbook window
Split box
Help
Close
Maximize/Restore
Minimize
Sheet tabs
Row header
Tab scrolling controls
Ribbon
Status bar
New sheet tab
Tab split
Scroll bar
Normal view
Page layout view
Page break preview
Zoom controls
Split box
Window resize handles

Figure 1-1

Navigating with the Mouse and Keyboard

The mouse is the primary tool that you use in Excel for executing commands, making selections, and navigating in the worksheet. Following are the mouse conventions that we use in this book:

- **Click:** Click the left mouse button once.
- **Double-click:** Click the left mouse button twice in quick succession.
- **Right-click:** Click the right mouse button once.
- **Drag:** Hold down the left mouse button and move the mouse. Release the mouse button to complete the drag operation.
- **Hover:** Place the mouse pointer over an element without clicking a mouse button.
- **Select:** Place the mouse pointer over an element and click the left mouse button.

Mousing around

Every mouse action is associated with some element in the Excel window. An *element* can be a slider, button, cell, chart object, and so on. You select or hover over the element using the mouse pointer.

Navigating through a worksheet with a mouse works just as you'd expect. Click a cell, and it becomes the active cell. If the cell that you want to activate isn't visible in the workbook window, you can use the scroll bars to scroll the window in any direction, as follows:

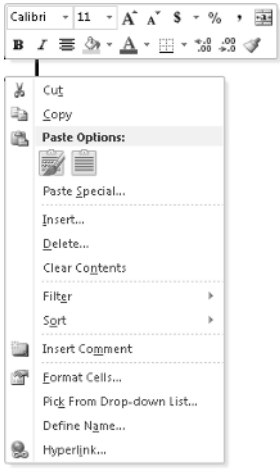
- To scroll one cell, click one of the arrows on the scroll bar.
- To scroll by a complete screen, click either side of the scroll bar's slider.
- To scroll faster, drag the slider.
- To scroll a long distance vertically, press and hold the Shift key while dragging the slider button.

Note that only the active workbook window displays scroll bars. If you activate a different window, its scroll bars appear.

After you right-click a cell, a range of cells, or another object in the worksheet area, Excel displays a *contextual* menu, so-called because the menu includes commands specific to working with the cell, range, or object.

For your convenience, Excel adds a minitoolbar above the contextual menu with useful commands drawn from the Ribbon, as shown in Figure 1-2. ***See also*** "Introducing the Ribbon," later in this part.

Figure 1-2



Using the keyboard

Most users will be comfortable using the mouse to do all their work in Excel. For users who prefer to use the keyboard exclusively when working in Windows applications or for users who prefer to split the use of the mouse and keyboard among various tasks, Excel provides the following solutions:

- Keyboard shortcuts
- Keyboard navigation
- KeyTips

The first two functions are described next. For more on the last function, KeyTips, ***see*** "Tipping off your keyboard," later in this part.

You can access commands in Excel using *keyboard shortcuts,* which are individual keystrokes or a combination of keys pressed simultaneously. To access the Print command using a shortcut, for example, you hold down the Ctrl key and press the P key, represented in this book as Ctrl+P. The following table lists some common keyboard shortcuts in Excel.

Shortcut	*Action*
Ctrl+A	Select all
Ctrl+B	Apply or remove bold formatting
Ctrl+C	Copy selection
Ctrl+F	Find
Ctrl+G or F5	Go to

Shortcut	*Action*
Ctrl+H	Replace
Ctrl+I	Apply or remove italic formatting
Ctrl+O or Ctrl+F12	Open a document
Ctrl+P	Print
Ctrl+S or Shift+F12	Save
Ctrl+U	Apply or remove underlining
Ctrl+V	Paste
Ctrl+W or Ctrl+F4	Close the active workbook
Crtl+X	Cut
Ctrl+Y or F4	Repeat the last action
Ctrl+Z	Undo the last action
F1	Display the help viewer
Ctrl+F1	Hide or display the Ribbon commands
F2	Enable editing within the active cell

With more than 17 billion cells in a worksheet, you need ways to move to specific cells. Fortunately, Excel provides you with many techniques to move around a worksheet. As always, you can use either your mouse or the keyboard on your navigational journeys. The following table lists the keystrokes that enable you to move through a worksheet.

Keys	*Action*
Up arrow	Moves the active cell one row up
Down arrow	Moves the active cell one row down
Left arrow	Moves the active cell one column to the left
Right arrow	Moves the active cell one column to the right
PgUp	Moves the active cell one screen up
PgDn	Moves the active cell one screen down
Alt+PgDn	Moves the active cell one screen right
Alt+PgUp	Moves the active cell one screen left
Home	Moves the active cell to the first column of the row that the active cell is currently in
Ctrl+Home	Moves the active cell to the beginning of worksheet (A1)
F5	Displays the Go To dialog box

cont.

Keys	Action
Ctrl+Backspace	Scrolls the screen to display the active cell
Up arrow*	Scrolls the screen one row up (active cell doesn't change)
Down arrow*	Scrolls the screen one row down (active cell doesn't change)
Left arrow*	Scrolls the screen one column left (active cell doesn't change)
Right arrow*	Scrolls the screen one column right (active cell doesn't change)

* With Scroll Lock on

Introducing the Ribbon

Excel comes with a user interface called the *Ribbon,* which consists of a series of horizontal tabs, each containing a variety of commands grouped according to function (see Figure 1-3). Most features in Excel 2010 are available through the commands on the Ribbon tabs.

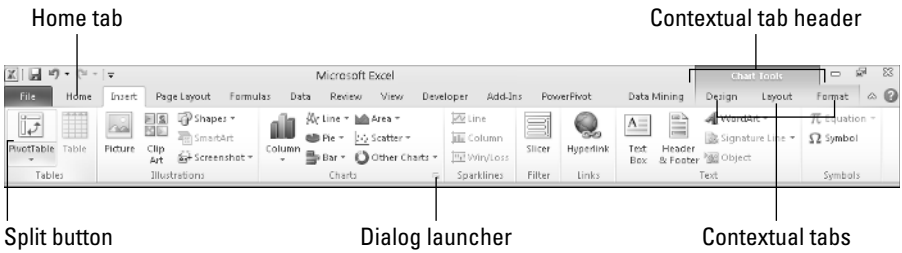


Figure 1-3

Dissecting the parts of the Ribbon

The commands on the Ribbon are accessed through a variety of *controls*. Here's a list of the various types of controls and other parts that make up the Ribbon:

- **Button:** This is the most common type of control. Most buttons on the Ribbon (except the formatting ones) have descriptive text associated with them, so you don't need to be a Mensa expert to figure out what a button represents. The most frequently used commands on each Ribbon tab have larger buttons.

  Most buttons execute commands directly when you click them. However, some buttons have an embedded downward-pointing arrow, and others have an attached downward-pointing arrow. Clicking a button with an embedded arrow displays a menu or gallery. For a button with an attached

arrow (known as a *split button*), the icon or text part of the button represents the most common command for the button. Clicking the arrow part displays a menu or gallery with additional commands or formatting choices. The two types of buttons with arrows look similar, but if you hover the mouse pointer over a button with an attached arrow, you see a clear delineation between the icon or text (command) part and the arrow (menu) part (refer to Figure 1-3).

- **Check box:** This is a square box that you click to turn an option on or off.
- **Command group:** Each Ribbon tab contains groups of related commands. For example, you find commands related to text fonts in the Font group of the Home tab.
- **Dialog launcher:** A *dialog launcher* is a command that launches a dialog box (a pop-up window) from a command group, menu, or gallery. The dialog launcher in a command group is a little button in the bottom right of the group frame. In addition, some menus and galleries contain options that launch dialog boxes. After you click a dialog launcher, a dialog box appears that presents additional choices. (However, the Ribbon displays the commands you are likely to use frequently, thus minimizing the need to launch dialog boxes.)
- **Drop-down list:** This list contains things you can choose from. Click the control's downward-pointing arrow to display the list.
- **Gallery:** A *gallery* is a control that presents you with a set of graphic choices, such as a particular formatting style (patterns, colors, and effects) or a predefined layout. An example of a predefined layout is a chart choice with specific elements preselected for inclusion in the chart. Galleries enable Excel to be more results oriented; that is, they present the likely result you are looking for first and then expose advanced choices through a dialog box or Ribbon command.

  Three types of galleries are available:

  - **Drop-down gallery:** This is displayed after you click certain buttons with downward-pointing arrows. This type of gallery presents a single column of choices and includes both graphic and text elements.
  - **Drop-down grid:** This is displayed after you click certain buttons with downward-pointing arrows. This type of gallery presents a two-dimensional grid of choices and does not include text.
  - **In-Ribbon gallery:** This is like the drop-down grid, but this gallery exposes a single row of choices directly within a Ribbon control group. You can click up and down scroll arrows to reveal additional rows, or you can click a drop-down arrow to display the full set of choices in a two-dimensional grid.

- **Menu, rich:** Rich menus have illustrative graphics, the command name, and in some cases a short description of what the command does.

  Remember: Don't confuse rich menus with drop-down galleries, although they look similar. Menus contain related *commands*. Galleries allow you to choose from among a set of formats or layouts.

- **Menu, standard:** Most users are already familiar with this form of menu — a drop-down list of choices with command names (such as Copy or Insert Cells). Some command names have small associated icons. If you click a command name that ends with an ellipsis (…), Excel displays a dialog box that presents further choices.

- **Spinner:** A spinner is a control with two arrows (one pointing up, the other pointing down) used with an input box to specify a number (height or width, for example.) Clicking an arrow increases or decreases the number in the input box. You can also enter a number in the box directly. The spinner control allows you to use only valid numbers.

- **Tab, contextual:** Contextual tabs give the Ribbon the power to expose most Excel features. One or more contextual tabs appear after you insert or select an object, such as a chart, shape, table, or picture. For example, after you insert a chart, three contextual tabs related to chart functionality appear on the Ribbon and a header labeled Chart Tools appears on the Excel title bar above the contextual tabs. Contextual tabs contain all the commands you need for working with the particular object. After you deselect an object, the contextual tabs (and the header) disappear.

  The general rules that govern the display of contextual tabs follow:

  - After you select an object (such as a chart, shape, or table), one or more contextual tabs for the object appear on the Ribbon. You must select a tab to display the associated commands.
  - After you insert an object, Excel displays the commands for the first tab of the contextual tab set for that object.
  - After you double-click an object, Excel displays the commands for the first tab of the contextual tab set for that object. Note that not all objects have this double-click capability.
  - After you select, deselect, and then reselect the object without using any other commands in-between, Excel displays the commands for the first tab of the contextual tab set for that object.

- **Tab, custom:** In addition to the built-in standard and contextual Ribbon tabs that Excel includes, you can create custom Ribbon tabs.

- **Tab, standard:** The Ribbon comes with a set of standard tabs, each organized according to the functions of the commands that it contains. For example, the Insert tab contains command groups to insert shapes, charts, tables, pictures, and so on. An exception is the Home tab, which is so-named because this is where you do most of your work in Excel.

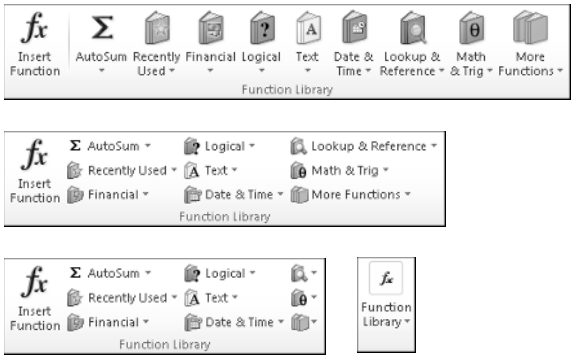
If your mouse has a scroll wheel, you can navigate quickly among the Ribbon tabs by hovering the mouse pointer over the Ribbon area and scrolling the wheel back and forth.

- **Text box:** A box in which you enter a number or text. In general, the Ribbon associates a text box with another control, such as a spinner or a drop-down box.

Sizing up the Ribbon

The layout of the Ribbon controls is not static. Depending on your screen resolution, or the Excel window size, or both, the Ribbon provides one of four layout options for command groups. If sufficient space is available, the Ribbon presents a layout that labels commands, displays more commands individually, and eliminates extra mouse clicks. As you resize the Ribbon downwards (by reducing the screen resolution or shrinking the size of the Excel window), the Ribbon rearranges the layout of some of the command groups by first resizing command buttons (larger buttons become smaller), then removing labels from commands, and finally reducing the groups to single large buttons (see Figure 1-4). To access the commands in a command group that the Ribbon resizes to a single button, you must first click the button to display a menu and then select the command.

Figure 1-4

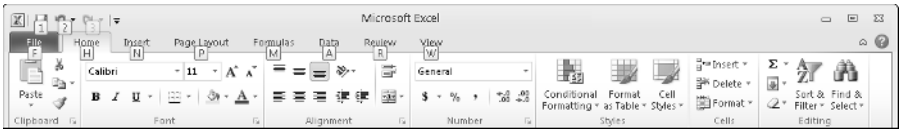


It is important to note that at each stage of downward resizing, no command groups or commands disappear entirely from the Ribbon. The multiple layout options for the command groups ensure that nothing is lost as space becomes more limited. If you reduce the size of the Excel window sufficiently, however, the Ribbon disappears altogether.

Tipping off your keyboard

Excel provides KeyTips, which allow you to access every command on the Ribbon using the keyboard, without having to memorize keystroke combinations! So, what are KeyTips? *KeyTip*s are little alphanumerical indicators containing a single letter, a single number, a combination of two letters, or a combination of a letter and a number, indicating what to type to activate the command under them, as shown in Figure 1-5.

Figure 1-5



Follow these steps to access a command on a Ribbon tab using a KeyTip:

1. Press the Alt key. The KeyTips appear over the Ribbon tabs. (Ignore the KeyTips that appear in the other areas of the user interface for this exercise.)
2. Press the key that represents the KeyTip for the Ribbon tab that you want to access. For example, press N to select the Insert tab. Note that you *do not* have to hold down the Alt key. If you need to select a different tab after you select the KeyTip for a tab, press the Esc key.
3. Press the key or key combination that represents the KeyTip for the command you want to use.

If the command you select is a drop-down gallery or drop-down grid, you can use an arrow key or the Tab key to highlight your choice and then press the Enter key to select your choice.

Remember: KeyTips are associated with in-Ribbon galleries, so you have to press the key that represents the KeyTip for the gallery before you can choose an option in the gallery.

Hiding the Ribbon commands

If you find that the Ribbon commands take up too much room in the Excel window, you can hide them using any of the following methods:

- Click the Ribbon's Minimize button in the Excel title bar (to the left of the help button)
- Press Ctrl+F1
- Double-click any Ribbon tab
- Right-click in the Ribbon area and choose Minimize the Ribbon from the contextual menu

After you hide the commands, only the Ribbon tabs are displayed. If you click a tab after you hide the Ribbon commands, Excel displays the tab commands temporarily. The commands are hidden again after you select a command in the tab or click away from the Ribbon area. Similarly, you can use KeyTips to select a command when the command display is hidden.

To redisplay the commands permanently after you hide them, use the same methods described for hiding the commands.

Remember: Excel maintains the hidden condition of the Ribbon commands if you exit and subsequently relaunch Excel.

Introducing the Quick Access Toolbar (QAT)

The Quick Access toolbar (or QAT) is an area of the user interface that provides quick access to commands. The QAT is designed to reduce the amount of navigation you have to do in the Ribbon to access the features that you use frequently. The QAT is located at the top left of the Excel title bar, above the Ribbon tabs (see Figure 1-6).

Figure 1-6

The QAT contains three default commands (Save, Undo, and Redo); you can add additional commands.

Follow these steps to add a command to the QAT:

1. Select the Ribbon tab that houses the command you want to add.
2. Right-click the command and choose Add to Quick Access Toolbar in the menu that appears.

To quickly add some commonly used commands to the QAT, click the arrow to the right of the toolbar and choose a command from the menu.

You can add an entire Ribbon command group to the QAT. Just right-click an area in the command group name (for example, Font) and choose Add to Quick Access Toolbar.

Follow these steps to remove a command (including the default commands) from the toolbar:

1. Right-click the command you want to remove from the toolbar.
2. Choose Remove from Quick Access Toolbar in the menu that appears.

If you think you'll be adding a lot of commands to the QAT, it's a good idea to move the toolbar from the title bar to a separate location below the Ribbon. Right-click anywhere on the QAT and choose Place Quick Access Toolbar below the Ribbon in the menu that appears. You can regain screen area for working in the worksheet by hiding the Ribbon controls temporarily.

You can access commands on the Quick Access toolbar using the keyboard. Press the Alt key and then a number key that represents the KeyTip for the command you want to access. ***See also*** "Tipping off your keyboard," earlier in this part.

Going Backstage

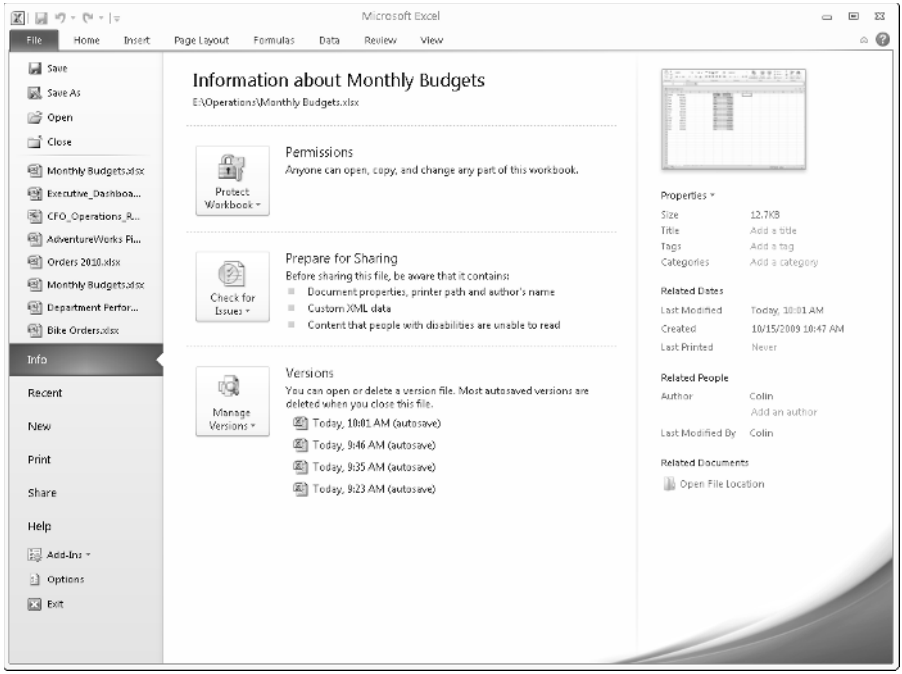
Excel 2010 introduces a new view for working with documents called the Backstage view. This view is accessed by clicking the File tab on the Ribbon. See Figure 1-7.

The Backstage view consolidates all document management tasks, such as opening, closing, and sharing files; printing; and setting document properties. In previous versions of Excel, many of these tasks were scattered all over the user interface.

On the left side of Backstage view is a *navigation pane* that consists of a mix of *quick command* buttons (such as open, close, and save) and vertically aligned tabs (Info, Recent, New, Print, Send & Save, and Help). The buttons execute commands directly, and the vertical tabs, like traditional horizontal tabs, expose a set of options. If you don't have any workbooks currently open, some of the buttons and tabs will be disabled.

A distinguishing feature of Backstage view is that while you work in this view, no part of the worksheet is visible. Also, Excel minimizes the Ribbon (assuming that you haven't previously minimized the Ribbon yourself). To return to the worksheet display view, click any Ribbon tab or press Esc.

Figure 1-7



The Backstage navigation pane includes an Options button, which gives you access to various Excel options. We encourage you to visit the options from time to time because you may find useful application, workbook, or worksheet options that you want to turn on or off. An option in the Advanced tab of the Excel Options dialog box, for example, allows you to increase the number of documents displayed in the Recent Workbooks list to a maximum of 50. You'll find a list of recent workbooks in the Backstage Recent tab.

Previewing Your Formatting Live

When you hover over a formatting option with the mouse pointer, Excel lets you see the effect that the formatting option will have on your selection *before* you commit to applying the option. This feature is called *Live Preview*. Your selection for Live Preview might be a cell, a range of cells, a chart, a table, a shape, and more.

Suppose that you want to change the font of some text in a cell. On the Ribbon, a drop-down box called the font picker presents a list of available fonts. As you hover over each choice in the font picker, your cell updates to show you what the text would look like if you chose that font. Live Preview avoids the normal tedium of committing to an option, then undoing the option because the result

is not what you wanted, and then committing to another option, only to realize that you don't like the new result either, and so on.

You find Live Preview options throughout Excel in places where formatting alternatives are available — most notably in galleries.

Remember: Live Preview formatting is not universal in Excel. Some elements provide formatting alternatives but do not have Live Preview support.

Formatting with Themes

In Excel, you can use a formatting concept known as a theme. A *theme* consists of a combination of fonts, colors, and effects that provide a consistent look among your workbook's elements, including cells, charts, tables, and PivotTables. You apply the theme's fonts, colors, and effects through individual options or the style galleries of the various elements.

Excel applies a default theme to all new workbooks along with a theme gallery so that you can change the default theme. After you select a new theme, all galleries and all the elements in your workbook formatted with theme styles change to match the new theme.

Following is a description of the three parts of a theme:

- **Theme font:** A theme uses two complementary fonts — a header font and a body font. All elements using themed styles use the same font or fonts. Click the arrow on the drop-down box (the font picker) on the Ribbon's Home tab to see the fonts used in the theme currently applied to the workbook.
- **Theme color:** A theme uses a matched set of twelve colors. Click the arrow on the Fill Color or Font Color tool in the Font group of the Home tab to see ten of the colors used in the theme currently applied to the workbook (see Figure 1-8).

Figure 1-8

The following are characteristics of theme colors:

- The top row in a color picker displays the base theme colors, and the next five rows display various tints and shades of the base colors. Below the theme colors are standard colors that do not change if the theme is changed. If you want to apply specific formatting that doesn't change after you change the theme, use a standard color.
- The first four columns of colors on the picker (from the left) are intended for text and background use. These colors are designed so that light text always shows well on a dark background, and vice versa.
- The next six columns of colors are used for accents. Most of the theme-style galleries in Excel make extensive use of accent colors.

The two colors that are not displayed on the color pickers are used for hyperlinks (not discussed in this book).

- **Theme effect:** Theme effects apply to graphic elements such as charts and shapes and include three levels of styles for outlines, fills, and special effects. Special effects include shadow, glow, bevel, and reflection.

You can change the theme in a workbook by clicking the Themes button on the Ribbon's Page Layout tab and selecting a new theme from the gallery that appears.

Remember: The Microsoft Office applications — Excel 2010, Word 2010, PowerPoint 2010, and Access 2010 — share the same themes. If you create reports that combine elements from each application, your reports will have a consistent look if you use a common theme.

Soliciting Help

With so many features and options available in Excel, it isn't unusual to get stuck once in a while. Fortunately, Excel provides the following methods for getting help easily:

- **SuperTips:** Standard ScreenTips (also called ToolTips), which have been available in Excel (and many other Windows applications) for some time, provide textual context to commands. After hovering your mouse pointer over a command having a standard ScreenTip, Excel displays the action of the command using either a single word (such as *Paste*) or a brief phrase (such as *Increase Font Size*). A standard ScreenTip helps to decipher the meaning of a command button, for example, when the button has no associated text and the command meaning is unclear from the button icon.

SuperTips take the concept a step further by adding a short description explaining the purpose of the command. Some SuperTips include an explanatory graphic when a text description is insufficient to explain the meaning of the command. SuperTips are available for all commands on the Ribbon. In many cases, the SuperTip explanation provides enough information so you don't have to seek additional help.

- **Contextual help:** If the SuperTip doesn't offer enough for you to understand the use of a specific command, you can get more detailed help. After you hover the mouse pointer over the command, the SuperTip that pops up lets you know whether additional help for the command is available by indicating that you can press F1 for more help.

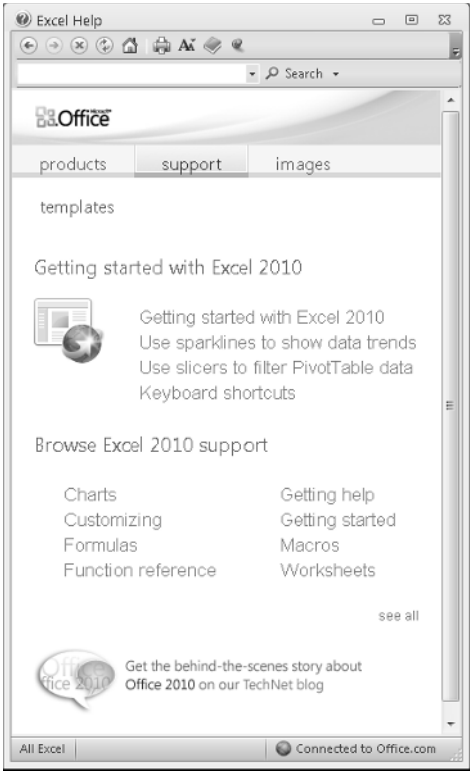
  If you are in a dialog box and need help for the dialog box options, click the help button on the dialog box's title bar (the question mark) to get contextual help.

- **General help:** Click the help button (the question mark) on the right side of the Excel title bar or press F1 when you are not in a specific context (for example, the mouse pointer is not hovering over a command on the Ribbon) to display a list of general help topics.

- **Backstage help:** You can access additional help topics in Backstage view. Click the File tab on the Ribbon and then click the Help tab. The Help tab consolidates the following help components:

  - **Support:** This option provides various ways to get Excel help and troubleshoot issues.
  - **Tools for Working with Office:** In this section, you can access general Excel options or check online for product updates.
  - **Product Licensing Status:** This component displays the Office 2010 products you are licensed to use on your computer, the applications included in each installed product suite, and the activation status of the products.
  - **About Microsoft Excel:** This component displays information that assists Microsoft Customer Service and Support in diagnosing any issues you are having with Excel. When you use contextual help or general help, Excel displays the help viewer, shown in Figure 1-9. The viewer sports Internet browser-style controls. In fact, it was built using the same technology that Microsoft uses in its Internet Explorer browser application. The viewer is not a full-fledged browser because you can view only Excel help content.

Figure 1-9



Although most of the options in the help viewer are self-explanatory, the following options require further discussion:

- **Search box:** You can enter specific search text in this box. The viewer stores a list of your text searches for the current help session. Click the drop-down arrow on the side of the box to view and select an item from the list if you want to review a previous search result.
- **Search split button:** Click the text part of the Search split button (or press Enter) to initiate a search after you enter the search text in the search box. Click the arrow part of the Search split button to define the search scope. By default, if your computer is connected to the Internet, Excel will display help content from an online source. If possible, you should use this source as your first choice because Microsoft updates the contents of online help regularly.

If you're offline when you initiate a search, Excel uses help content internal to your system. Whether online or offline, you can narrow your search scope further by selecting an appropriate option from the Search button menu.

- **Status bar:** The left side of the status bar (located at the bottom of the help viewer) displays the current search scope. On the right side of the status bar is a connection status button that displays the current connection status (online or offline). You can click this button to switch quickly between viewing online and offline help content.
- **Pin button:** By default, Excel keeps the help viewer window on top when you're working in an application. Use the Pin button to control this behavior. If you "unpin" the viewer by clicking the button, Excel hides the window automatically if you click anywhere inside the Excel window.

If you want to resize the help viewer window, move the mouse pointer to any edge of the window until the pointer changes to a double-headed arrow, and then drag the mouse.